

We are Equal Partners: Recommended Practices for Involving Families in Their Child's Educational Program

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Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center
Gallaudet University

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An Introduction to the Sharing Results Series

“Sharing Results” is a series of occasional papers that describe the results of work undertaken by the Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center in its three priority areas of literacy, family involvement, and transition from school to postsecondary education and employment. The focus of each of these papers is determined through an extensive public input process with parents, educators, service providers, and researchers throughout the country. The Sharing Results series includes three kinds of papers:

1. descriptions of critical needs in the Clerc Center’s priority areas and the processes used to identify those needs,
2. descriptions of the results of collaborations between the Clerc Center and other schools and programs to develop and implement innovative approaches to some of the persistent challenges of the Clerc Center priority areas, and
3. extensive descriptions of the evaluation of selected innovations to provide information to help program planners determine whether an innovation would be appropriate for their program.

It is hoped that the Sharing Results papers will provide valuable information and ideas to parents, educators, service providers, researchers, and others interested in the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.

Note: Copies of the Sharing Results papers can be ordered through the Clerc Center. To order printed copies of these documents, or for a complete listing of other Clerc Center publications, please contact:

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About the Editor

Dr. Margaret Hallau is director of the National Outreach, Research, and Evaluation Network at the Gallaudet University Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. She holds a B.A. from Roanoke College, an M.A. from George Peabody College, and a Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. Her areas of study were reading, curriculum development, special education, and administration. She has worked for Gallaudet University since 1980, first as an instructional designer and then as an administrator of programs related to curriculum, research, evaluation, outreach, and publications. *We are Equal Partners: Recommended Practices for Involving Families in Their Child's Educational Program* was compiled from the transcripts of the National Forum on Family Involvement and feedback from the participants. It was written for the Clerc Center's KidsWorld Deaf Net Virtual Library and the Sharing Results series.

Introduction

It's "Back to School Night" and the meeting room is crowded with children, their families, and school staff members. The anticipation of a new school year is in the air. Families want their children to succeed. School staff members want their students to succeed, and they know that this is more likely if students' families are involved. For a variety of reasons, not every family is present at this meeting. The response of the school staff members to the families who are not here is critical in ensuring that all families have the opportunity to be full participants in their children's educational program.

The familiar scene described above is pivotal in understanding how families and schools can work together to enhance the education of children who are deaf or hard of hearing. When Gallaudet University's Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center began exploring areas of critical need for involving families in the education of their children, we were struck by one of the clear messages from the parents: "Ask us." Through this message, parents were expressing their frustration with programs that designed family involvement activities without much input from them and then expressed concern when the families did not show up for the activities. Maybe they were held at a time that was inconvenient for families, maybe there were transportation problems, or maybe the topics were not a priority for those families.

We wanted to find programs where families were actively involved in the education of their children so that these programs could identify strategies they used. We also wanted to find programs that helped families learn how to support their deaf or hard of hearing child's full participation in the life of the family. Through a competitive process described below, parents with deaf and hard of hearing children and educators from eight programs from around the country were selected for a National Forum on Family Involvement. This paper describes the results of the intensive, four-day forum. The results of the forum have been summarized into recommended practices for involving families in their children's educational program. We hope that educators and families can use these recommended practices to develop insights into the effectiveness of their own programs and of their interactions with deaf and hard of hearing children. For a more comprehensive description of the results of the forum, see the summary in Appendix A. For further information from the forum participants, e-mail addresses are provided in Appendix C.

This paper is organized into three sections:

Section I: Background

This section includes the background of the Clerc Center, an overview of the National Forum on Family Involvement, and the process for developing recommended practices for family involvement. It describes Partners for Progress, the process by which the Clerc Center develops collaborations with schools and programs from around the country. An extensive description is provided in Appendix B. This section also includes a brief

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overview of the forum and a list of participating programs. A more comprehensive description of the forum is provided in Appendix A; Appendix C describes the participating programs in detail. The multi-step process used to synthesize and verify the information shared in the forum is also described in this section.

Section II: Recommended Practices for Family Involvement

The practices are arranged into six categories:

1. Collaborating with Families
2. Program Goals/Overview
3. Resources
4. Program Structures
5. Families from Diverse Cultures
6. Student Progress

Each category contains general statements about the practices, followed by examples of the practices in action (specific strategies and activities used by the programs to implement the practice).

Section III: Appendices

A. Summary of Information Provided by Parents and Educators at the National Forum on Family Involvement

This appendix includes session notes and excerpts from transcripts of the forum. These are the source documents for the recommended practices (Section II).

B. National Agenda-Setting Process, Critical Needs, and Requests for Collaboration in Family Involvement

This is an extensive description of the process used by the Clerc Center to identify critical needs in the three priority areas of family involvement, literacy, and transition from school to postsecondary education and employment. Also included is a description of the critical needs in family involvement that resulted from the national agenda-setting process. Finally, the Request for Collaboration process is described.

C. Participants and Programs in the National Forum on Family Involvement

This is a description of the eight collaborating programs and the names of participants, a description of their roles, and their contact information. Readers are encouraged to contact the programs to learn more about the practices in action.

D. Other Resources

This section includes references from the excerpt of *How Public Input Shapes the Clerc Center's Priorities: Identifying Critical Needs in Transition from School to Postsecondary Education and Employment*, as well as on-line resources from the KidsWorld Deaf Net Useful Links library.

Section I: Background

Clerc Center Background

Gallaudet University's Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center is charged by the United States Congress with developing, evaluating, and disseminating innovative curricula and materials and instructional techniques and strategies that can be used in various educational environments throughout the nation that serve individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. Within the broad spectrum of all deaf and hard of hearing students and their families, five groups have been identified as requiring special attention from the Clerc Center. These target populations are students who:

- are lower achieving academically,
- come from homes where languages other than English are used,
- have secondary disabilities,
- are from diverse cultures, or
- are from rural areas.

The Clerc Center collaborates with schools and programs throughout the United States to identify and describe best practices in educating deaf and hard of hearing children. The Clerc Center focuses on best practices in its priority areas of literacy, family involvement, and transition from school to postsecondary education and employment. Best practices are those practices that work across different educational programs and methodologies; evaluation evidence is needed to document the effectiveness of a practice. An initial step in identifying best practices is to document the experiences from a variety of programs that share common goals. These experiences form the basis for recommended practices. With systematic evaluation, recommended practices may later be identified as best practices for programs to review and possibly incorporate into their own programs.

Partners for Progress is the process used by the Clerc Center to develop collaborations with schools and programs across the country. Through an inclusive process that ensures participation of all major stakeholders, especially families and professionals, Partners for Progress:

- identifies critical needs in the priority areas;
- develops Requests for Collaborations (RFCs) based on the critical needs;
- facilitates review of RFC applications by a group outside the Clerc Center;
- recommends potential collaborators to the dean of the Clerc Center, who makes the final selections; and
- implements the collaboration.

Partners for Progress makes special efforts to include those programs serving the traditionally underserved populations of students who are lower achieving academically, come from homes where languages other than English are used, have secondary

disabilities, are from diverse cultures, or are from rural areas. Consideration is given to different communication and educational methodologies and philosophies so that a variety of approaches are included.

An Overview of the National Forum on Family Involvement

One of the results of the Partners for Progress process was the National Forum on Family Involvement, which was held at Gallaudet University from March 1-4, 1998. Forum participants were selected from the pool of RFC applicants because their programs routinely develop family activities based on information about family priorities and needs obtained directly from the families. These programs also provide families with the skills and strategies they need to enable their deaf or hard of hearing child to interact as a full participant in the family.

Parents and educators from the following eight schools and programs participated in the forum (note: these were the program names at the time of the forum):

- Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Statewide Programs in Early Childhood Education and Technical Assistance to Schools Programs (ASDB-ECE), Tucson, Arizona;
- Foothill and Pasadena Special Education Local Plan Agencies (SELPAs) and TRIPOD Deaf and Hard of Hearing Programs, Burbank, California;
- Hawaii Services on Deafness, American Sign Language Training for Families Program, Honolulu, Hawaii;
- The Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center, Seattle, Washington;
- Lexington School for the Deaf, Ready to Learn Parent-Infant/Toddler Program, Jackson Heights, New York;
- Los Angeles Unified School District, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Parent-Infant Program, Encino, California;
- Louisville Deaf Oral School, Louisville, Kentucky; and
- Tennessee School for the Deaf, Parent Outreach Program, Knoxville, Tennessee.

(The updated names of the forum participants' programs, a description of the programs, and contact information are included in Appendix C; readers can send questions about the programs and strategies directly to the participants.)

During the four-day forum, participants shared information and experiences through large and small group discussions, with parents and educators in separate groups for part of the meeting. The large group discussions were audiotaped and transcribed. The results of the small group discussions were put on chart paper and typed later.

Participants felt that a significant outcome of a program must be empowerment of the deaf child as a member of the family. In order to accomplish this outcome, families need open and unbiased information on a range of topics so they can make informed decisions.

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Families need knowledge and skills, such as how to participate effectively in their child's Individualized Education Program meeting. For programs to work successfully with families, they need to view families as partners, with this attitude being reflected in everything that is done at school. Extended family members need to be included in a structure designated for different family members, with particular attention to involving the fathers. The design of the program needs to be flexible and to include components such as ongoing assessment and a focus on literacy and communication. Deaf and hard of hearing staff members from a variety of cultural backgrounds, functioning as equal team members, are an important program component.

Process for Developing Recommended Practices for Family Involvement

At the conclusion of the forum, the participants described how empowering it had been to share their experiences and acknowledged that it would be challenging to capture the essence of their program experiences and translate them into recommended practices for others. The recommended practices appear to be the kind of activities that most programs would look at and say, "Of course we do that." However, as one of the educators reported in an interview 18 months after the forum, "We really thought we viewed parents as *equal partners*. But as a result of the discussions at the forum, we looked at ourselves more closely, revised our training programs, and moved toward a relationship-based program. In reality, we have truly become partners with parents."

A three-step process with forum participants resulted in the recommended practices described in Section II. First, the forum discussions were transcribed and sent to the participants for their review. Based on their reviews, staff at the Clerc Center compiled a summary of the information that the forum participants felt reflected the practices used at their schools and programs. The summary of the forum was synthesized into a set of recommended practices, organized into six categories, for family involvement that were reviewed by participants and by Clerc Center family educators. The forum participants reviewed and provided feedback on multiple subsequent drafts of the practices.

Section II: Recommended Practices for Family Involvement

The recommended practices derived from the forum have been organized into six categories:

1. Collaborating with Families
2. Program Goals
3. Resources
4. Program Structures
5. Families from Diverse Cultures
6. Student Progress

Each category contains one or more italicized general statements in bold face that synthesize related concepts. Taken together, these statements describe recommended practices. These are followed by examples of the practices in action, which are specific strategies and activities. The abbreviated names of the programs utilizing specific strategies and activities at the time of the forum are included in parentheses. It should be noted that, over time, the practices used in a specific program may have increased or decreased in emphasis. E-mail addresses as well as the full name and description of the participating programs are included in Appendix C so that the reader may contact them for additional information.

Category: Collaborating with Families

In a program where parents and caregivers and program staff work collaboratively as partners, the program staff are positive, flexible, resourceful, and accepting. Parents and caregivers and staff are viewed as equal in what they bring to the table. Together, parents and caregivers and program staff make decisions about program planning and design. Communication between program staff and parents and caregivers is informal, frequent, appropriately personal, and two-way.

Note: Because families have unique characteristics and “parent” may not best explain a family’s situation, “caregiver” is also used in this paper.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Staff and parents and caregivers work together to establish the philosophy of parents and caregivers as partners. This philosophy is reflected in everything that’s done at the program. For example, parents’/caregivers’ goals for their children are included in plans for the child. Monitoring of progress occurs during periodic meetings. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers are involved in planning and implementing program-wide activities. Professionals are encouraged to consciously “move out” of the role of the expert and acknowledge the expert in each parent and caregiver. Participation by the

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parents and caregivers in planning committees helps families and staff develop relationships and is an important strategy for utilizing input from families. (Hawaii, Lexington, Louisville)

- ✓ Parents and caregivers need opportunities to become involved in a variety of roles, beyond that of “an observer.” The program develops creative ways to involve parents and caregivers and members of the extended family, especially grandparents. (Hawaii, Seattle)
- ✓ An open-door policy establishes an atmosphere in which concerns can be freely shared. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Tennessee)
- ✓ Recreational outings and informal get-togethers provide fun for the family and support communication development. They help family members relax and develop relationships with other families and with program staff. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ Family involvement activities tend to focus on four areas: home visits; activities that build communities, such as chili suppers, family Olympics, and picnics; activities that take place in the community, such as visits to museums and the circus; and activities that extend education, such as literacy/math development activities and weekend workshops for both parents and caregivers and their children. (Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Louisville, Tennessee)
- ✓ Encouraging parents and caregivers to identify their priorities, resources, and preferred learning styles in home inventories, yearly surveys, or informal discussion groups provides information that can be used by the program to design appropriate activities for the family. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Louisville, Tennessee)
- ✓ Food, child care, and transportation make it possible for families to participate in parent programs. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Tennessee)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers need a variety of kinds of information, in layman’s terms and in a “short and sweet” format. For example, information about interpreters and the Individualized Education Program/Individualized Family Service Plan (IEP/IFSP) process are presented at the family’s level. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ Communication books shared between staff and parents and caregivers help the parents and caregivers to know what is happening with their child in the program and the staff to know what is happening at home. (Lexington, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Communication strategies include school-wide newsletters, long-range calendars, daily summaries of the child’s day, and routine phone calls. The staff accommodates

each family's preferred communication style and home language. (Burbank, Hawaii, Lexington, Louisville)

- ✓ In some situations, communication barriers may be overcome by participation in chat rooms on the Internet and by providing information about Web sites that deal with deafness and other topics of interest. (Arizona, Seattle)

Category: Program Goals

Program components focus on language and communication, which promote the development of literacy. There are avenues for parents and caregivers and families to develop communication skills with children and, more broadly, to learn parenting skills. Families learn strategies to help them include the deaf child as an interactive member of the family, one who shares in family decisions, concerns, responsibilities, and joys.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Families and staff discuss ways to communicate, with the guiding principles of being creative and making the communication visual. Starting with communication skills rather than with specific language skills decreases frustration. (Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ For families who sign, information from the program about books and videos that involve signing increases the awareness of family members and friends of the importance of sign language. Similar resources are available for families who use other approaches to developing language and communication. A parent lending library makes resources readily available to families. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ For families who sign, sign language classes at various levels incorporate principles of communication, parenting skills, and play/literacy development. (Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Louisville, Tennessee)
- ✓ For families who sign, signing at all times when communicating with other children, neighbors, and grandparents is critical if the child is to be a full participant in the family. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ For families who sign, having lists of signs the family is working on (as a resource for both the family and the program) enhances the development of sign language. (Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Programs help families learn how to involve the child as a full participant in the family by showing them how to use environments inside and outside the home to foster development of communication skills and language. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington)

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- ✓ Involving siblings helps the deaf child be a full participant in the family. In workshops for siblings, they play games, have discussions, and learn how to enhance communication in their families. For home visits, staff members include the entire family if possible. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers learn about language and communication development through weekly playgroups for young children that include teachers and occupational, speech, and physical therapists. Meetings with the audiologist and speech therapy in the home provide additional learning opportunities. (Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)

Category: Resources

The program provides unbiased, accurate information so parents and caregivers can make choices. The perspectives of informed individuals with varying points of view, such as deaf individuals, other parents and caregivers, and professionals, are a part of the information provided to parents and caregivers.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ It's important that parents and caregivers support other parents and caregivers, no matter what communication approach is used by the family. Parents and caregivers have opportunities to meet parents and caregivers from other programs. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers are encouraged to read current literature and talk to a wide variety of individuals. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Louisville)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers develop an understanding of their deaf child as they ask questions, learn about the unique needs of their child, and take advantage of available services. As parents and caregivers share stories with one another, they learn about the successes and mistakes of others. Informal meetings with deaf people with varying points of view provide parents and caregivers with the insight needed to make informed decisions. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)

The program provides opportunities for families who have expressed an interest to become involved in the Deaf community through participation in churches, clubs, support groups, social gatherings, field trips, and other activities with Deaf adults. The key is flexibility in how these activities take place, especially in areas with few Deaf adults.

Note: Deaf with an uppercase "d" usually refers to a group of deaf people who share a culture and a language—American Sign Language. The more generalized lowercase "deaf" is used throughout this paper to refer to people with a hearing loss.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Deaf adults are members of the program staff and are involved in a variety of roles, such as the parent education program and reading to children. (Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Louisville, Tennessee)
- ✓ Deaf adults have a wide range of roles. As board members, they determine program goals and direction in conjunction with other members. They share information about the Deaf community, creating natural networks and community connections. Deaf adults have opportunities to become involved in the education of young deaf children and are welcome to attend functions. Some of the more traditional roles include guest speakers to parent groups, participation in field trips, modeling storyreading strategies, and teaching sign language. Other roles could include a Deaf mentor program that trains and connects a deaf, native signer with a family to help them learn sign language and about Deaf culture. (Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ Information and support are provided when deaf moms attend parent groups. They discuss how to talk about issues with middle- and high school-aged students (e.g., AIDS, etc.), as well as about issues with younger children. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington)
- ✓ Small groups with both deaf and hearing individuals as well as a skilled facilitator help the participants develop helpful insights about cultural values and communications. (Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Program staff helps families locate a deaf person who might live with the family or participate in vacation or weekend activities. (Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)

The program staff identifies resources to support a broad range of needs. These might include transportation and access to materials, books, and resources. The program staff supports family members as they learn about these resources and determine how to use them and provides training so that parents and caregivers understand and can successfully implement new knowledge.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ When the program staff knows the family and what works for them, they can share options of available services so the parents and caregivers can pursue what is needed. Likewise, there is collaboration among professionals so that appropriate articles or other information can be shared with the family without overwhelming them. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tennessee)

- ✓ In terms of social services, the program staff knows about the available choices and shares them with the family. With the goal of empowering families, the program staff provides emotional support and guidance. Parents and caregivers may need information about meeting basic needs through social services (e.g., food stamps, car seats, etc.). (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ The program provides education about and a connection to other resources such as early intervention programs, vocational rehabilitation, and interpreter and medical services. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle)
- ✓ The attitude of the staff and the program components result in empowered parents and caregivers who can reach out to others and who can empower their own children. The parents and caregivers have an emotional support network as well as an information network. They can find out about services, resources, and programs and have learned to use technology as a resource for finding out information. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Tennessee)
- ✓ Interpreters are provided when necessary. Referral to appropriate interpreting services is made for medical and other needs. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Louisville, Tennessee)
- ✓ It is important to identify the services that families living in rural areas need and then to take the programs to the families. Better collaborative efforts between agencies lead to activities such as annual statewide learning weekends, which permit families to meet each other. Directories of families with deaf children provide a way for the families to establish contact with other families. Linking parents and caregivers to other parents and caregivers is critical, especially for those who use languages other than English. Another strategy for schools or agencies serving a large geographic area is to use part-time staff who reside in local areas and who are knowledgeable about local resources. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Tennessee)

Category: Program Structures

There are different levels of involvement with clear pathways for becoming involved. There are various opportunities for different family members, including fathers, siblings, and the extended family. The program offers flexible locations and meeting times. Respect for cultural differences and sensitivity to differing abilities is evident. Program structures encourage parent-to-parent interactions. There are extensive opportunities for families and for the program staff members to work and play together and to learn from each other.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Staff meets with families at mutually agreed upon times, including evenings and during parents' and caregivers' lunch hours. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Louisville)

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- ✓ Home-based services include fathers and extended family members by offering flexible meeting times. Parent advisor/parent-infant therapists also utilize input from the parents and caregivers in the design of family-school activities. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ The program has convenient times when fathers can get together with the child and also meet with other fathers in support groups. (Hawaii, Seattle)
- ✓ By asking about other family members, their importance is recognized. Praising other family members' involvement is helpful in involving the extended family. (Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Center-based services include strategies for involving parents and caregivers and children in concurrent activities such as play/parent group sessions and sign language classes or play group sessions. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers volunteer for a range of activities that tap into their expertise, including raising funds, organizing discussion groups, serving as family advisors, serving in Parent Teacher Associations or on parent/teacher committees, organizing Girl Scout troops, participating in workdays, volunteering in classes, and making presentations to boards. Parents and caregivers attend family learning weekends, workshops for extended family members, and support groups, and participate in deafness-related organizations. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles, Tennessee)

Category: Families from Diverse Cultures

The program is accepting of different cultures. It finds ways to involve parents and caregivers from different cultures in ways that meet the families' needs. A non-judgmental attitude and openness are important, especially in terms of making cultural connections. Trust is built through one-to-one connections. Coordination of language services for spoken, signed, and written information is needed to ensure appropriate delivery of information to families that do not use English.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Cultural differences are explored and celebrated through class and family activities. "Culture days" develop cultural sensitivity and language access. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Louisville)
- ✓ Questions asked during the admissions process relate to cultural differences in celebrations, restrictions, and needs. (Lexington)

- ✓ Training of staff on topics such as cultural sensitivity occurs before working with families. Developing cultural awareness and sensitivity is an ongoing professional development goal. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Louisville)
- ✓ Programs examine what “involvement” means and vary expectations according to family needs. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Trilingual (English, ASL, and the language of the family) interpreters are especially effective. Interpreters and teachers, especially if working as a team, provide the necessary information to the extended family. (Arizona, Burbank, Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Learning sign language is supported by sign language videos in the language of the family and sign classes taught bilingually. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Parents and caregivers are free to choose the language for meetings, either their home language or English. (Arizona, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Tennessee)
- ✓ Materials are translated into the family’s primary language. Interpreters are provided when necessary. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Louisville)

Category: Student Progress

The assessment team includes the child’s parents and caregivers as well as educators to provide accurate and timely information for determining whether or not the child is making satisfactory progress. Observations from parents and caregivers are included so that the assessment process becomes more collaborative between the program and the parents and caregivers. A focus on the successes of the individual student is essential. An important role of the program is to help the parents and caregivers consider the benefit of the program’s goals and philosophy for their child.

Practice in Action:

- ✓ Expecting parents and caregivers to be part of a child’s ongoing training and education is often more important than just talking to them about goals. Parents and caregivers who “see and do” educational activities with their children are more likely to understand their child’s goals. (Arizona, Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles, Louisville)
- ✓ Periodic speech, language, and auditory assessments are conducted, as are assessments of cognition and behavior. Input from parents and caregivers regarding their child’s progress, concerns, and goals for the child is at the center of all assessments. (Arizona, Burbank, Seattle, Lexington, Louisville, Tennessee)

- ✓ Parents and caregivers are provided adaptive solutions rather than technical solutions. Programs pay attention to information from families who describe effective strategies they use with their child and the kind of additional learning that those strategies provide. (Hawaii, Seattle, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Direct communication about homework, attendance, and classroom behavior with a daily progress checklist from each class keeps the parents and caregivers informed about what is happening with their child and provides a starting point for conversation. (Lexington)
- ✓ Assessment information is explained to parents and caregivers in language that they can understand. If the program staff explains successful classroom accommodations to parents and caregivers, they can advocate for their child in other settings. (Hawaii, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)
- ✓ Planning for transition as the child moves through the program is important in maintaining the child's progress. (Arizona, Seattle, Lexington, Los Angeles)

Section III: Appendices

Appendix A: Summary of Information Provided by Parents and Educators at the National Forum on Family Involvement, Gallaudet University, March 1-4, 1998

Summary of Breakout Sessions

During the forum, there were multiple breakout sessions in which the parents and educators met separately. The results of these sessions will be presented in detail below. In general, participants felt that a significant outcome of a program must be empowerment of the deaf child as a member of the family. In order to accomplish this outcome, parents and caregivers need unbiased information on a range of topics so they can make informed decisions. They need knowledge and skills, such as how to participate effectively in their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting. For programs to work successfully with parents and caregivers, they need to view parents and caregivers as partners, with this attitude being reflected in everything that is done at school. Extended family members need to be included in activities designated for different family members, with particular attention on involving the fathers. The design of the program needs to be flexible and to include components such as ongoing assessment and a focus on literacy and communication. Deaf staff members from a variety of cultural backgrounds, functioning as equal team members, are an important program component.

The following sections contain the compiled responses from parents and educators, organized around a series of questions that the participants were asked in the breakout sessions. The responses have been summarized for each question. These responses and the transcripts of the large group activities are the basis for the recommended practices described in Section II.

Parents discussed a series of questions about the kinds of activities they participated in, why they participated initially, why they continued participating, the needs that were being met and those that were not, and ways they were involved in developing the program. Parents identified what they would tell other parents of a deaf child about getting their child involved in the family and the family involved in their child's school programs.

Educators identified effective strategies and the criteria they used to determine whether or not a strategy was effective in involving families. They also identified strategies that were not effective. The educators identified the main themes of what's working across programs related to involving families with their program and with their children.

Both groups discussed how to meet the needs of the target populations served by the Clerc Center. The results of the breakout sessions are presented below.

Responses from Parents in the Breakout Sessions

What activities have you participated in?

Parents volunteer for a range of activities, including raising funds, serving in Parent Teacher Associations, organizing Girl Scout troops, and participating in workdays. They take sign language classes, serve as family advisors, work on parent/teacher committees, and organize discussion groups. They attend family learning weekends, workshops for extended family members, and support groups, and participate in deafness-related organizations. Weekly toddler group activities with occupational and physical therapists and teachers, along with meetings with the audiologist and speech therapist in the home, provide parents with information about language and communication development. A wide range of Deaf community activities such as Deaf Theatre or athletic activities, or community activities involving other deaf children such as Girl Scouts or Big Brother/Big Sister, provide opportunities for recreation and socializing with new Deaf families.

What makes you want to participate in the first place?

The most compelling reason mentioned by the parents was simply “the kids.” They want their children to succeed and, in order to do so, they believe they must learn about what it means to be deaf. Parents described their need to belong and feel accepted, to communicate and share ideas and experiences. A flexible program treating them as equal to or on the same level as the educators encourages participation. The parents value and believe in parent responsibility. They appreciate the convenience of having services at home and school, especially when the program works with the family in their own language. They expect to continue to learn and grow and to be advocates for their children.

What makes you want to continue participating?

The most important reason that parents continue to participate is that the goals are working. There is less frustration and more communication with their children. They see progress with their children. Through networking and sharing, friendships develop and parents become a part of the program and develop connections for themselves and their children. Interacting with members of the Deaf community encourages continued participation.

What needs of your family are being met by the activity?

Parents feel empowered and their children are happier. As parents become part of the program and feel included, their social needs are met and they become more involved with the program. As communication with their children becomes easier, relationships with their children are enhanced and the children make progress. Families start to see themselves as equals with other families with deaf children.

How do the activities encourage your involvement in your child's program?

When suggestions and goals from the parents are respected and encouraged, parents feel that their needs are being met and their feelings respected. They serve as role models for new families and in roles such as interpreters for the drill team and counselors. They partner with teachers for activity teaching such as cooking class and other hands-on activities. They also noted that some of the activities, such as working on newsletters, could be done at home. In these situations, they can still be involved with the program without having to be physically at the program.

Were you involved in any way in developing the activity?

Parents were members of the planning committee for activities such as organizing the monthly schedule. They noted that "Staff + Parents + Food = Success." Parent groups discussed interpreters and ways to support the school. They also planned fund-raisers, including getting donations from companies and support from organizations such as the Rotary Club.

What needs have not been met?

Unmet needs can be categorized into those that relate to the larger educational system, the specific program, training and education, interpreters, and to the specific needs of bilingual parents. In terms of the system, the general concern is that families do not receive the same level of support from the program after the preschool program is completed. There are also gaps in the system so that services and programs may not be equally available to all age levels or that needed services are not available. Parents felt that stronger outreach to the parents by the programs was needed, along with flexibility for family involvement. Parents wanted help from the educators in dealing with questions from their communities. Individual schools need to develop individual standards that fit the families. Parents said that they needed more information on transition.

In terms of training and education, parents see the need for stronger emphasis on understanding language and communication development, education, advocacy, and Deaf culture. They need more tools (how to, knowledge) to put into action what they learned from the programs. For parents of newly identified deaf children who may not be familiar with deafness, there should be a book. In general, more information is also needed about assistive devices such as alarm clocks and TTYs.

Parents said that there is a need for more interpreters, especially those who are prepared to work in educational settings. Advocacy efforts to get more interpreters are needed.

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There is limited access to interpreters who are fluent in the languages of the families as well as in sign language.

Activities need to be offered at times that are accessible to working parents and in places that are accessible by public transportation. It is critical that information be provided in languages other than English.

Based on what you've seen, experienced, and heard here, and on your own experience, what would you tell the parents of a deaf child about getting their child involved in the family? And the parents involved in their child's school programs?

In considering what to tell other parents of a deaf child about getting their child involved in the family, the parents offered five categories of advice:

- the importance of communication,
- the need for advocacy,
- the value of Deaf culture,
- the need to involve the entire family as well as friends, and
- the importance of high expectations.

Importance of Communication

Communication begins with listening—taking a break to focus on each child and stopping what you are doing to listen. Listening includes other siblings and spouses. It's important to be patient because it takes more time to do things and to communicate about those things. Parents suggested that developing skills for communicating with their child decreased the child's frustration as well as their own. Families should discuss ways to communicate, with the guiding principles of being creative and making the communication visual. Parents emphasized the importance of signing at all times—not only when communicating with their deaf child, but also when communicating with other children, neighbors, and grandparents. Sharing information about books and videos that involve signing increases the awareness of family members and friends about the importance of sign language. The parents also suggested keeping a list of the signs the family is working on.

Advocacy—Parent to Parent

One of the key pieces of advice to other parents is to understand that, "It will be okay." Asking questions and learning about hearing loss, as well as taking advantage of available services, helps parents understand and accept their child. It's important that parents support other parents no matter what communication approach is used by the families. As parents share stories with each other, they learn about the successes and mistakes that others have made. In terms of visiting the school program, it is important to visit before the child starts the program as well as while the child is in the program. It's also helpful to pair up with other parents to see the school. Once the child is in school,

parents should go out of their way to see that the child is involved, encouraging the child to join clubs and to participate in events at the school.

Deaf Culture (Deaf is Normal)

An important concept in getting the deaf child involved in the family is to understand that being deaf or hard of hearing doesn't have to be a disability. As parents become involved with deaf people through activities, such as inviting them to dinner, parents can become more comfortable and learn how deaf people handle various situations. For example, direct communication with extended family members can occur with a TTY, which hearing parents might learn about from deaf families. Parents said that it is also important for hearing children to participate in deaf-related events.

Involving the Entire Family and Friends

The deaf or hard of hearing child is part of a family and it is important to focus on the total family. Fathers and siblings need to feel welcomed and not excluded. One strategy for including every family member is for all family members to learn to sign so that one family member, usually the mother, does not become an interpreter for the child. Another strategy is to negotiate with fathers about how and when to be involved, listening to the concerns of the fathers. Quality time with the entire family is important. The ideas discussed above in "Importance of Communication" also apply to involving family and friends.

Expectations

Expectations for the deaf child should be the same as for other children in the family, and the same is true for discipline. The same rules should apply, regardless of whether the child is deaf or hearing. The child who happens to be deaf is a member of the family. Parents should not be afraid to delegate responsibility to the child and to have high expectations about how the child should do things. Deaf children should be a part of the family's daily routine. Parents can encourage independence by letting their children make their own choices and leading family activities. The final piece of advice is not to treat the deaf child as special, but like the other children in the family.

Getting Involved

In considering what to tell other parents about getting themselves involved in their child's program, parents offered three categories of advice: how to work with the program, how to work with other parents, and how to be an advocate for their child.

In terms of working with the program, the parents encouraged other parents to try to build a rapport with teachers and others who come in contact with the child because this will help the child feel more comfortable. Parents are encouraged not only to use the program as a resource but also to be advocates for the school. Parents should welcome visits to their home and put aside their worries about the appearance of their home.

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It's important to take advantage of parent support groups. At the same time, it's important to embrace but not overwhelm new families. Saying hello and letting them know they can ask questions and express opinions is a helpful strategy. A father reinforcing other fathers' involvement is important. Strategies such as parent phone trees encourage parents, especially those in residential schools, to stay in touch.

In terms of advocacy, it's important for parents to educate other adults, such as legislators, at an appropriate level. Persistence is necessary to hold legislators and boards of education accountable for ensuring that the needs of deaf and hard of hearing students are addressed through appropriate legislation and that current legislation is enforced.

Based on what you've seen, experienced, and heard here, and on your own experience, what would you tell the program about establishing partnerships to involve your child in your family? What would you tell the program about how to be involved with your family?

Programs can help families learn how to involve the child as a full participant in the family by providing activities for the family to do together. Follow-up activities can build on previous activities so that the family and child can progress. Families need communication strategies to get the child involved in a language that they all understand. Programs can help families locate a deaf person who could live with the family or participate in vacation or weekend activities.

In giving advice to programs about how to be involved with their families, parents suggested parents be viewed as partners, that the program should know the strengths and needs of the individual families, and that the program should include extended family members.

Parents as Partners

Staff and parents must work together to establish the philosophy of parents as partners. This philosophy should be reflected in everything that's done at the school. For example, goals that parents want children to reach should be included in plans for the child, along with periodic meetings to monitor progress.

Parents need opportunities to become involved in the school in a variety of roles beyond that of an observer. The program should develop creative ways to involve parents and extended family members, especially grandparents. Persistence may be required in finding ways that each family member can be involved. An open door policy establishes an atmosphere where concerns can be shared freely.

Parents need a variety of kinds of information, in layman's terms and in a "short and sweet" format. For example, information about interpreters and the IEP process needs to

be presented to the families. Communication books shared between staff and parents help the parents to know what is happening with their child in the program.

Strengths and Needs of Individual Families

When the program knows the family and what works for it, they can share options of available services and let parents pick what is needed. Likewise, appropriate articles or other information can be shared with the family without overwhelming them. An important theme of the parents' comments was concerning the role of the father. It's important for the program to have times when the fathers can get together with their children and also meet with other fathers in support groups that meet at convenient times. Programs can create situations where deaf and hearing parents can interact and where hearing parents can interact with deaf adults, either in or out of school.

Involving the Extended Family (Non-caregiving Family Members)

Programs need to provide events that involve the whole family, including workshops for extended family members. Services such as interpreters and transportation may be required in order to involve the entire family. By asking about other family members, their importance is recognized. Program staff can encourage involvement by noticing and commenting on the involvement of extended family members.

Responses from Educators in the Breakout Sessions

What effective strategies for involving families have been used in your program?

The educators described three broad categories of strategies: empowering parents, the role of deaf adults in the program, and the location of services. In addition, they described ways to support involvement, such as providing transportation. Those strategies that focus on utilizing input from parents in the design of family-school activities are described below. Programs with involved parents provide what families want, not what the professionals think they need.

Empowering Parents

Empowered parents make informed decisions. The role of the program is to provide unbiased, accurate information so parents can make choices. Parents are seen as partners, with professionals and deaf adults in supporting roles that empower the parents. It is important to engage parents by determining what they can offer and by valuing and respecting them as individuals. Programs have structures in place so that parents can step right in; there is a path for involvement that is clearly established. Parents learn a problem solving-process and pick their own goals. There are "sharing of culture days" to develop cultural sensitivity and language access. Parents are free to choose the language for sessions, either their home language or English. Parent-to-parent support is encouraged,

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for example, in dealing with medical issues. Parents help each other through these kinds of experiences. Involving input from families in the design of family-school activities and allowing parents to build relationships and develop communities happens if family learning weekends are developed that include program staff and if there are specific activities for families within activities such as a Sign Language Festival.

Involvement of Deaf Adults

Deaf adults have a wide range of roles. As board members for the program, they determine program goals and direction in conjunction with other members. They share information about the Deaf community (e.g., deaf baseball teams, deaf dentists), creating natural networks and community connections. As parents attend Deaf cultural events, they not only develop more awareness but also have fun. They meet Deaf people in professional positions with families. Information and support are provided when deaf moms with deaf and hearing children attend parent groups, when deaf teachers model story-reading strategies and discuss how to talk about issues with middle and high school-aged students (e.g., AIDS, etc.). Small groups with both deaf and hearing individuals as well as a skilled facilitator can help the participants develop insight about cultural values and communication issues. Some of the more traditional roles of deaf individuals in program activities include guest speaking to parent groups, participating in field trips, serving as role models as students prepare for post-high school experiences, and teaching sign language.

Using Home- and Center-based Services

Home-based services help professionals gain insights into family systems and cultural backgrounds. A critical component of the program, home-based services can include extended family members and fathers by offering flexible meeting times. Input from the parents in the design of family-school activities is considered as parent advisor/parent infant therapists provide information, support, and sign language tutoring.

Center-based services include strategies for involving parents and children in concurrent activities such as play group/parent group sessions and sign language classes/play group sessions. Sibling involvement was mentioned as an important focus for helping the deaf child be a full participant in the family. In Friday evening Sibshops, for example, siblings play games, have discussions, and learn how to enhance communication.

Supporting Involvement

Offering food, child care, and transportation are high on the list of things that encourage families to become involved in the school. Providing interpreters and paperwork in the language of the families is essential. Participation by the parents in planning committees helps families and staff develop relationships and is an important strategy for utilizing input from families. Recreational outings and informal get-togethers provide fun for the family and also support developing communication and helping the family to relax. In

some situations, communication barriers may be overcome by participation in chat rooms on the Internet.

In-service training for staff on partnering with parents includes discussions about topics such as effective programming for parents, how to provide access for all parents, and respecting parents. An attitude of valuing and respecting parents is reflected throughout the program. Input from families may result in schedule changes so the staff should have flexible schedules to work with parents in the evenings and on weekends. Another result is respect for family lifestyles and commitment to achieving goals.

When staff provide consultations to day care providers and to other specialists such as occupational and physical therapists and vision specialists, then it is easier for parents to continue to be involved with their child's program. The emphasis is on developing a reciprocal model in coordinating services, especially as families move from one level of the program to the next, such as from parent-infant services to preschool programs.

How do you know the strategy is effective?

Families participate when the strategy is effective. Children are involved in family life because families are healthy and communicating. Families continue to participate in their children's educational process and are effective advocates. Parents see themselves as decision makers in their children's education.

What have you tried that didn't work?

Several strategies failed at the planning stage, such as providing in-services for parents without involving them in the planning process or only asking for input but not involving families in the design or process of the program. In terms of the kinds of services provided, offering a menu of services that was not individualized for families was not effective in involving parents. Following only the agenda set by the professionals, especially in terms of nonparent-friendly IEP meetings, created barriers to involvement.

Language barriers, including both the reading level of the materials and the language level of the home, were encountered in mass distribution of materials. Several obstacles were noted. Getting teams of specialists to understand and work together requires that they know about the needs of deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. This is especially true for the case manager.

A final obstacle was identified for residential schools in terms of the difficulty of involving parents who may live some distance from the school.

Based on what you have experienced, seen, and heard here, what appear to be the main themes of what's working across programs in involving families with their program and with their child?

The themes identified by the educators can be clustered into three categories: attitude, program components, and outcomes with the goal of family involvement being that the child becomes a successful adult.

Attitude

In programs where parents and program staff are to work collaboratively as partners, the program staff is positive, hopeful, and accepting. Parents and staff are viewed as equal in what they bring to the table. There is a mindset that recognizes, respects, and values parents and families although sometimes staff training is needed to bring about changes in staff attitudes. Programs provide support to guide parents, families, and children toward independence and empowerment. Family-centered programs accept parents as they are and focus on their present circumstances. Communication between program staff and parents is informal, frequent, personal, and two-way. The program provides different levels of involvement and is flexible in its locations, meeting times, and times to call. Respect for cultural differences and sensitivity to different handicaps is evident.

Program Components

The program components facilitate family involvement. For example, program structures provide a clear pathway for parents to be involved and there are designated opportunities for different family members. Program structures encourage parent-to-parent interactions. Parents also have opportunities to meet with Deaf adolescents and to see Deaf children who are older than their children are. The program encourages the family to become involved in the Deaf community through participation in churches, clubs, and other activities with Deaf adults. The key is flexibility in how these program components take place.

There is continuity as children make transitions to different parts of the program. Parents are involved in decision making and program planning and design. Programs have a wider view of what family involvement means and understand that parents may not be involved in ways traditionally defined as “involvement.” Programs are accepting of different cultures and find ways to adapt programs (or ways parents are involved) to meet the needs of different cultures.

Program components focus on language and communication, which promote the development of literacy. There are avenues for parents and other family members to develop communication skills with children and, more broadly, to learn parenting skills. Teachers function as coaches with family members on “applicable skills” in the home. Ongoing assessment of the family and child provides accurate and timely information for determining whether or not the child is making appropriate progress.

Deaf adults from a variety of cultural backgrounds are an integral part of the program and are equal members of the team. The staff also includes trilingual interpreters or access to them. Program planning activities include individuals from the cultures of the families in the program. Teachers and consultants reflect the cultures of the families in the program.

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The programs offer mediation with other resources, such as vocational rehabilitation, interpreters, and medical services. The programs provide parents with open and unbiased information so they can make informed decisions. Included is information from Deaf adults who have varying points of view. Programs must also be supportive of the decisions of the parents, even if the program staff would have made a different decision. Services for parents include transportation and access to materials, books, and resources, in addition to sign language resources. There are extensive opportunities for parents to work and play together and learn from each other. Programs should be willing and able to help parents with things that are not necessarily related to deafness.

Outcomes

The attitudes of the staff and the program components result in empowered parents who can reach out to others and who can empower their own children. The parents have an emotional support network as well as an information network. They can find out about services, resources, and programs and have learned to use technology as a resource for finding information. The child is not a set of broken ears; he or she is a part of the family and is expected to grow into a successful adult.

Discussion of the Needs of Families in the Clerc Center Target Populations

Parents and educators discussed how to meet the needs of the Clerc Center target populations, which are identified in the Education of the Deaf Act Amendments of 1992. These include underserved populations of students who are from homes where languages other than English are used, are lower achieving academically, are members of diverse cultures, who live in rural areas, or who have additional disabilities.

How do you get families whose children are lower achieving academically involved in their child's program?

(Students who are lower achieving academically in general are not making progress on their IEP goals. Students who have goals that are at earlier developmental levels than their peers would also be included in this definition.)

What Does Not Work?

Families may not be provided with sufficient or accurate information because it is difficult for the professionals to find the words to tell the family about their child. As a result, unrealistic goals are set for the IEP. At the same time, parents said that it is not helpful to the parent to label the child. Psychological evaluations need to be explained in a meaningful way. Parents need adaptive solutions rather than technical solutions. It is not helpful to ignore information from families who describe the strategies they use with their child to compensate and the kind of additional learning that they provide. Also,

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pulling students away from academics for needed support services because there are no scheduling options does not work.

What are the Unmet Needs?

Coordinating support services of various specialists in learning disabilities, cognitive disabilities, and occupational and physical therapy is difficult. As families and children grow, it is difficult to maintain the kind of family-centered focus of the Parent-Infant Program. There is a lack of careful and sensitive communication on diagnostic/evaluation information to parents. The parents said that sensitivity by medical professionals is an unmet need.

What Works?

To meet the needs of students who are not making progress on their IEP goals, the program staff and parents must build trusting relationships. To build a trusting relationship, the program staff needs to share program goals and philosophy. A focus on the successes of the student on an individual basis, rather than a focus only on the child's deficits, is essential.

In terms of assessment, there needs to be a team approach, with parents actually observing the diagnostic/evaluation process. Formal assessments should be accompanied by observations, including those from parents, so that the assessment process becomes more collaborative between the program and the parents. As parents and educators team with other professionals, the dimensions of the learning problems become clearer. An important role for educators is to make the link between diagnostic information and the real impact it has on the child's learning.

Services for the family need to be structured in a way that supports the child being a part of the family and addresses the needs of the whole family. Parent education in basic child development and parenting skills is needed, with additional support for parents of teenagers. Program staff should work with the parents to obtain available resources.

In terms of the school program, direct communication about homework, attendance, and classroom behavior with a daily progress checklist from each class keeps the parents informed about what is happening with their child. Parents and staff should develop a plan together to close the gap between the goals on the IEP and the current level of achievement. This plan may include additional support, such as tutors, for literacy and math development and other skill areas, as well as goals for parents. Levels and domains need to be explained in language that parents can understand. If the program staff explains successful classroom accommodations to parents, the parents are empowered to advocate for their child in other settings. Planning for transition as the child moves through the program is important in maintaining the child's progress.

How do you get families from rural areas involved in their child's program?

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It is important to identify the services that rural families need and then to take the programs to the families. Better collaborative efforts between agencies could lead to activities such as annual statewide learning weekends. These would permit families to meet each other. Directories of families with deaf children could provide a way for the families to establish contact with other families. Finally, technological support from the Internet, teleconferences, and additional programming on television could address some of the isolation of rural families with deaf children.

What Does Not Work?

It is difficult to make the initial contact to get information to families. Schools are reluctant to pass information freely to family members and to other schools. For parents without computers or access to computers, the Internet is not accessible. Students are isolated and have no social activities with other deaf kids. Without TTYs in the homes, it is difficult for deaf students to contact other deaf individuals.

What are the Unmet Needs?

One of the main issues is limited resources, which then impacts other needs such as ways for parents to network and be in contact with other parents. Parents may not have the opportunity to learn about what it means to be deaf, child development, parenting skills needed for deaf children, and communication options. In fact, there may be a limited number of options available. For parents who use languages other than English or sign language in the home, the unmet needs are compounded. Programs designed for people of different cultures and multilingual interpreters are scarce. One potential solution is to empower parents to help support other parents.

How do you get families from rural areas involved in their child's program if they are also families with students who are lower achieving academically, are from homes where languages other than English are used, have additional disabilities, or are members of diverse cultures?

In terms of the families themselves, rural families and parents should be on decision-making and planning school boards and councils, with transportation provided if necessary. Parent-to-parent connections, with information provided by more experienced parents, can provide opportunities to involve other parents. Statewide family learning programs with sliding scale fees and support for transportation can bring families into contact with other families as well as local deaf people and lead to increased involvement. At a different level, television programs could be developed to begin changing social perceptions of deaf education and of what deaf people can do and be.

How do you get families who use languages other than English involved in their child's program?

A non-judgmental and accepting attitude is important, especially in terms of making cultural connections as a way to be accepted (e.g., Navajo community). Training of staff on topics such as cultural sensitivity and understanding the characteristics of a particular culture needs to occur before working with families. Programs need to examine what “involvement” means and vary expectations according to family needs. Trust is built through one-to-one connections. Parents also need opportunities to share their culture with program staff.

In terms of support services, program staff should know about the available choices and share them with the family. With the goal of empowering families, program staff should provide emotional support and guidance. Parents may need information about meeting basic needs (e.g., food stamps, car seats).

Language and interpreter issues are a central concern in working with families from non-English speaking families. Trilingual (English, ASL, and the language of the family) interpreters are especially effective. Interpreters and teachers, especially if working as a team, can provide information to the extended family. Written materials should be offered in other languages or interpreted for families. Learning sign language can be supported by sign language videos in other languages and sign classes can be taught bilingually.

Parent advisors can provide a bridge between parents and the school, especially if the parent advisor who works with the family speaks the family’s primary language. One important role for the parent advisor is accompanying the family to appointments (e.g., medical, audiology, or Supplemental Security Income meetings) as an advocate. Parent advisors or other program staff can recruit deaf adults with the same ethnic background as the families to meet and share with them.

What Does Not Work?

It is not effective to give a family information that is not in their native language. Nor is it helpful to talk down to parents.

What are the Unmet Needs?

Families sometimes need support at the survival level first to meet their basic needs. Teaching tools in the home need to focus on items available in the home, such as food, if toys are not available. More attention should be given to including extended family members. In many situations, family access to technology (e.g., VCR to watch sign language videos) is limited. Families need information about the range of options for their deaf or hard of hearing child.

There is a cluster of needs related to language, such as the need for more written materials in a variety of languages and more audio/visual materials or alternative ways for non-literate families. More accessible sign language materials and bilingual sign language classes available for siblings are also unmet needs.

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How do you get families who use languages other than English involved in their child's program if they are also families with students who are lower achieving academically, have additional disabilities, are members of a diverse culture, or are from rural areas?

A good starting place is to use deafness, the common bond, as a focus. It is important that program staff are sensitive to how critical and emotional the situation is for the parents. It is important to remember that families are still the experts when it comes to their child. As families have opportunities to tell their stories, other parents can be compassionate and provide support. Program staff also need to provide more information about other disabilities to all of the parents.

Transportation and interpreters are essential support services. It is important to educate the whole team that is working with the family and to provide flexible scheduling. Since there are many doctors' appointments, supporting families and providing explanations are needed. Program staff can facilitate family-to-family connections when families live in close proximity.

An activity, such as events on a Saturday with food and child care for families, is one of the strategies to involve families, as well as providing statewide conferences.

Appendix B: National Agenda-Setting Process, Critical Needs, and Requests for Collaboration in Family Involvement

The following information is an excerpt from *How Public Input Shapes the Clerc Center's Priorities: Identifying Critical Needs in Transition from School to Postsecondary Education and Employment*, which was prepared by Judith M. LeNard. It is published as a part of the Clerc Center's Sharing Results series. This excerpt is supplemented with a list of the critical needs in family involvement that were identified through the Clerc Center public input process.

Introduction

Gallaudet University's Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center (formerly known as Pre-College National Mission Programs) is charged by the United States Congress with developing, evaluating, and disseminating innovative curricula and materials and instructional techniques and strategies that can be used in various educational environments throughout the nation serving individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing. Within the broad spectrum of all deaf and hard of hearing students and their families, five groups have been identified as requiring special attention from the Clerc Center. These target populations are students who:

- are lower achieving academically,
- come from non-English speaking homes,
- have secondary disabilities,
- are from diverse cultures, or
- are from rural areas.

In carrying out its mandate for a national mission, the Clerc Center is required by Congress to “establish and publish priorities for research, development, and demonstration through a process that allows for public input” (Education of the Deaf Act Amendments of 1992). The process of collecting public input assures that the Clerc Center obtains information about needs and issues from the broad range of people and institutions it intends to serve.

The Clerc Center takes its responsibility for gathering public input very seriously. A systematic process to collect public input for the purpose of establishing priorities in research, development, and dissemination has been evolving since 1994. Public input is also solicited throughout the process of reviewing and selecting collaborative projects.

Part I: Collecting Public Input

In 1994, the Clerc Center invited 16 representatives from the various constituencies it serves to act in an advisory capacity to the vice president. These representatives, who later became known as the National Mission Advisory Panel (N-MAP), came from:

- centers or residential schools for the deaf,

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- day schools for the deaf,
- mainstream programs with deaf and hard of hearing students,
- regular elementary and secondary education programs,
- university programs,
- the deaf community,
- former students of Kendall Demonstration Elementary School (KDES) and the Model Secondary School for the Deaf (MSSD), and
- parents of students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

At its initial meeting, N-MAP considered a large number of potential priorities for the Clerc Center's national mission, then narrowed the list to three:

- literacy for all,
- family involvement, and
- transition from school to postsecondary education and employment.

N-MAP identified these large priority areas, but it was the Clerc Center's responsibility to define and expand each area. The Clerc Center developed a process (called Partners for Progress) to include representation of all of its constituencies in the course of identifying critical unmet needs within each of the three priority areas.

Partners for Progress is the primary mechanism through which the Clerc Center identifies priorities for national mission activities in the three priority areas. In developing this mechanism, the Clerc Center has drawn on the experience and guidelines of the National Science Foundation Grant Proposal Process (1996), the National Science Board and National Science Foundation Staff Task Force on Merit Review Work (1996), the National Institutes of Health Grants and Contracts Process (1995), the U.S. Department of Education's Program Effectiveness Panel (1988) and System of Experts Panel (1997), and the Gallaudet Research Institute's selection and review process for priority research funding (Carol Traxler, personal communication, February, 1996). The purpose of Partners for Progress is to increase the impact of the Clerc Center's efforts in research, development, and dissemination by:

- identifying critical unmet needs within each of the three priority areas, and
- working collaboratively with programs and individuals to meet these needs.

To complete the initial step of identifying critical unmet needs, the Clerc Center employed many varied sources of information through the strategies described below.

Strategies for Collecting Public Input

The Clerc Center gathered information from constituents using a number of different strategies over a period of several years. The first two strategies, Frequently Asked Questions and the Priority Feedback Project, began in 1996 and provided excellent background in each of the three priority areas and a base of information used in successive strategies.

Frequently Asked Questions. This first strategy collected information from the teachers and staff of KDES and MSSD, who receive a number of questions and comments—many from parents—through phone calls, letters, and visits to the schools requesting information about the education of students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DiPietro, 1997). Clerc Center teachers and staff compiled a list of questions most frequently asked by parents and educators from across the nation. The list was sorted into the three priority areas. Most of the questions in the area of transition were the eternal questions familiar to many professionals: Will my son go to college? What kinds of jobs do deaf people get? Will my daughter be able to get a scholarship to college? Will the school help my daughter get a job? What percent of graduates go to college? What will happen to my son if he can't go to college? These questions are at the root of transition planning for both parents and professionals working with deaf and hard of hearing youth.

Priority Feedback Project. The second source of public input also included all three priorities. The Priority Feedback Project, conducted in 1996, was the first systematic endeavor to gather public input on the three priority areas for the Clerc Center's national mission (Hallau, 1997). Clerc Center teachers and staff were asked to identify individuals and programs throughout the nation that they felt contributed in important ways to the education of deaf and hard of hearing individuals. Seventy-six potential contacts were selected, representing identified constituencies. The following concepts guided the selection of the final list of potential contacts:

- Contacts should be in similar proportion to the number of deaf and hard of hearing students placed in specific programs.
- Two-thirds should be contacts from schools and programs serving deaf and hard of hearing students; the rest should include parents, individuals, and representatives of postsecondary programs, organizations, or agencies.
- Individuals who received multiple nominations should be included on the list of potential contacts.
- The various regions of the country should be represented, with as many states participating as possible.

Twenty-one representatives of constituent groups, including public schools, schools for the deaf, parents, agencies, and postsecondary institutions, participated in in-depth telephone and TTY interviews. The interviewers asked three questions about each of the priority areas of literacy, family involvement, and transition from school to postsecondary education and employment:

- What are the areas of greatest need?
- What resources are needed that are not currently available?
- What individuals or programs come to mind as important contributors in this priority area?

Of those individuals interviewed, approximately 50 percent represented public schools, 25 percent represented center schools, and the other 25 percent included parents, a service agency, and a postsecondary institution. Thirty-one additional contacts were attempted.

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This first effort at collecting public input was a valuable learning experience for the Clerc Center. The phone and TTY interviews were an enlightening opportunity to talk with and get the perspectives of a variety of people. The contacts were very interested and impressed that the Clerc Center took the time to call them for feedback. The results of these interviews are summarized in the third section, “Results from the Public Input Process on Transition.”

Based on their experiences, the contacts made suggestions for revising the process. Their suggestions included making the survey shorter by focusing on one priority at a time, or by first focusing on the expertise of the contact and then, if he or she expresses an interest, exploring other areas.

The Clerc Center analyzed the problems with the 31 calls that could not be completed. About one-third reached wrong numbers or numbers that were not in service. Another one-third did not return calls after numerous attempts and/or messages had been left. The remaining calls reached respondents who were unable to schedule a convenient time to call back. This process for gathering public input, while yielding valuable information, proved to be time-consuming and labor-intensive.

This first systematic public input effort benefited the Clerc Center in several ways. In addition to the insights into critical needs in the three priority areas, the Priority Feedback Project provided guidance for future work on the process of public input. It also demonstrated the value of several important modifications:

- the need to target respondents with questions that clearly focus on their expertise and interests,
- the need to gather information through shorter and more focused surveys, and
- the need to gather information in a variety of formats.

The Priority Feedback Project also provided valuable contacts for future input and review efforts.

Stimulus Paper and the National Dialogue. When the Clerc Center chose family involvement as the first priority area for in-depth public input, additional strategies for gathering information were implemented. To identify the critical needs in family involvement, the Clerc Center sponsored a National Dialogue on Family Involvement (Pre-College National Mission Programs, 1996). This two-day meeting included 11 experts in early childhood education, parents of deaf and hard of hearing children, researchers, educators, and state project directors. As a part of their preparation, participants responded to a stimulus paper developed by two faculty members in the Gallaudet University Department of Education describing major premises in family involvement.¹ This stimulus paper was also sent to more than 60 people with interest in families of deaf and hard of hearing children and youth. Twenty-two individuals,

¹ This stimulus paper on family involvement has been revised and is currently available as a publication by Bodner-Johnson and Sass-Lehrer (1999) in the Clerc Center’s Sharing Ideas series.

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including parents of deaf children, administrators, teachers, and researchers, provided written feedback on each of the 16 premises in the stimulus paper.

The results of the National Dialogue and the feedback on the paper were synthesized with feedback from the 21 phone and TTY interviews from the Priority Feedback Project and findings from the most Frequently Asked Questions, primarily questions from parents about the long-term future of their deaf and hard of hearing children.

(End of excerpt from LeNard's paper)

Critical Needs in Family Involvement

The Clerc Center identified critical needs in the area of family involvement by an analysis of the feedback from the stimulus paper and the National Dialogue, along with analysis of questions asked frequently and in-depth interviews. Eight critical needs emerged:

1. Schools need to provide information to families.

The clear pattern in the analysis is that parents who responded want unbiased information so they can make the best decisions for their child and their family. A strong sub-theme was that schools and other professionals have philosophical biases and cannot overcome them. This creates conflicts between the family and the school. Parents wish to be empowered in dealing with schools. Some parents related that they do feel empowered and attribute this to an equal partnership with teachers. The teacher appears to emerge from a number of comments as a key person who enables the parent to feel empowered. However, *information* is the major empowering tool for parents. A related sub-theme is that information is not uniformly available for all parents because of geographic, economic, and linguistic differences. Another observation from parents is that information needs to be in a form that is accessible to parents with various educational levels.

One of the interesting patterns that developed about the topic of information for families was a somewhat different perspective of parents and professionals. Both groups felt that information was very important, but professionals primarily remarked on the need to convey specific content, strategies for informing parents, or difficulty in the process of conveying information. They did not remark on the possible bias of information or the need to provide a spectrum of options for parents.

2. Schools need to get information about needs of families directly from families.

Parents reiterated the theme that the family, not the school, was the center of the child's development. The major theme was if you want to know the family's needs, ask the parents. Several of the parents commented that parent involvement tends to be a standard set by the school and they resented being evaluated or described as "less involved" if they

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did not participate in the activities that the school had developed, especially when the activities did not meet their needs.

3. Schools need to develop collaborative relationships among families, teachers, administrators, deaf and hard of hearing adults, and the community.

This need was viewed positively by many parents and professionals, but by others as idealistic and not the norm. This has many implications for needs in other areas. Parents and professionals may differ in their ideas about what is best for the child, especially in terms of language and communication options. As parents seek information about language and communication options, they may determine that options different from those being offered by the school would be more appropriate for their child. The stage is then set for conflict rather than collaboration between parents and the school.

4. Parents need support, particularly from other parents.

Hearing parents enter a new and different world when they have a deaf child. They need support to understand what deafness means to the child and the family and how to best meet new and unexpected needs. The emphasis was on the parent-to-parent support available through a number of mechanisms like parent support groups.

5. Families need to learn communication and linguistic skills for interaction with their deaf child.

Surprisingly, there were not a lot of comments from parents in this area. The comments dealt mostly with the need for the training of parents in the area of communication skills. Most of the focus was on teaching sign skills and the necessity of parents to keep the skill development on a par with the changing needs of the developing child. People who do not advocate sign communication made a minority of responses and those remarks are reminders that regardless of the educational approach the parents choose for the child, they need training to help them utilize the communication approach the child is using.

6. The family-school relationship needs to be based on a developmental model.

Parents and professionals alike generally recognize this need. The emphasis was on the information that parents need at different points in the development of the child. Parents need to see the normal developmental crisis as just that—normal—and not related directly to deafness.

7. There is a need to set goals and agree on criteria for measuring success.

There was no disagreement on the importance of measuring success, but little mention of how.

8. The needs of families from the underserved populations should be more systematically examined.

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In looking at the respondents, the Clerc Center was concerned that the views of the parents from the underrepresented populations were not adequately represented. The parents who provided written responses to the stimulus paper tended to be non-minority. In addition, Dr. Kay Meadow-Orlans, a participant in the National Dialogue on Family Involvement, had reported a similar concern in her study of parents' perceptions of the services received after their child was identified as deaf or hard of hearing. This concern led to the request for collaborations on research studies for rural families and Hispanic families, described below.

Requests for Collaboration in Family Involvement

Collecting public input on critical unmet needs is not an end in itself. The purpose is to guide the Clerc Center's research, development, and dissemination. To accomplish this objective, Partners for Progress works collaboratively with programs and individuals by developing projects that have an impact on unmet needs. Information about these projects is disseminated in a Request for Collaboration (RFC) that invites programs to collaborate with the Clerc Center. The Clerc Center uses the following criteria for identifying projects. Those selected for collaboration with the Clerc Center must:

- be responsive to needs identified in the public input process,
- be applicable to all educational settings,
- supplement, not duplicate, other ongoing work,
- focus on target groups as much as possible, and
- lead to an impact.

Three RFCs were developed for family involvement. RFC-1 was a request for research studies on how parents and guardians from traditionally underserved groups obtain and utilize information about educational options for their deaf or hard of hearing children. The results of this RFC are described in *A Look at Rural Families Weighing Educational Options: Identifying the Factors that Influence Parents as They Make Educational Placement Decisions for Their Children Who Are Deaf* by Vicki L. Wolfe and *A Look at the Decisions Hispanic Families Make After the Diagnosis of Deafness* by Annie Steinberg, Lisa Bain, Yuelin Li, Louise Montoya, and Vivian Ruperto. Both papers will be available from the Clerc Center's Sharing Results series in Summer 2002.

RFC-2 and RFC-3 were requests for participation in a National Forum on Family Involvement for selected programs to share strategies and materials that have been successful in their programs. Professionals and parents representing the programs discussed issues in family involvement and identified future research and development priorities.

Almost 500 individual requests for application materials were received from a broad spectrum of public and private colleges and universities, public and private elementary and secondary school programs, nonprofit parent organizations, and community organizations across the United States and its territories. The completed applications, which represented diverse settings and regions, were reviewed and selected through a

competitive process involving parents, researchers, and professionals working with families. Eight programs were selected to participate in the National Forum on Family Involvement.

Appendix C: Participants and Programs in the National Forum on Family Involvement

The Clerc Center's Partners for Progress announced the selections for participation in the National Forum on Family Involvement in October 1997. Following months of planning by participants from the programs and the Clerc Center, the National Forum on Family Involvement took place at the Gallaudet University Kellogg Conference Center in Washington, D.C., on March 1-4, 1998. Programs and representatives who participated in this productive partnership are described below. In some cases, there have been personnel changes and new contacts are included along with updated program descriptions.

Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Statewide Programs in Early Childhood Education and Technical Assistance to Schools Programs (ASDB-ECE) Tucson, Arizona

This program serves birth to five-year-old deaf or hard of hearing, multiply disabled, or deaf-blind children and their families. The ECE services for infants and toddlers include audiological assessments, Individualized Family Service Plan development, parent education, sign language classes, toddler groups, therapies, and assistance with obtaining needed social and pre-school transitioning services.

Coordinator Peggy Kile and parents Julianne Reble and Christine Santana participated in the forum representing ASDB-ECE.

Contact: Peggy Kile, Coordinator
Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, Statewide Programs in Early Childhood Education and Technical Assistance to Schools Programs
<http://www.asdb.org>
E-mail: pkile@asdb.state.az.us

Burbank/Foothill SELPA/TRIPOD Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Burbank, California

At the time of the forum, this public school program was housed in the Burbank Unified School District in Burbank, California. The model co-enrollment program served 120 deaf and hard of hearing children along with 58 of their hearing siblings in regular school classrooms. The co-enrollment philosophy, along with regular and special education teachers and services, supports an environment that encourages deaf and hard of hearing children to acquire the academic, social, and emotional skills necessary to participate fully as a member of the family.

Educational specialist Cindy Murphy and a parent, Mary Harvey, participated in the forum representing Foothill and Pasadena SELPA and TRIPOD.

Contact: Patty Ivankovic, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Specialist
Burbank Unified School District
<http://www.tripod.org/facts.htm>
E-mail: CRE8MEMPAT@aol.com

Hawaii Services on Deafness, American Sign Language and Literacy Training for Families Program
Honolulu, Hawaii

This program, designed to meet the needs of families who are served by the Hawaii Center for the Deaf and the Blind and various mainstream state educational programs, makes American Sign Language accessible to working families by providing after-work classes, childcare for infants, refreshments, and staff support for family involvement. The program makes it possible for deaf and hard of hearing children and their families to learn to communicate together in a common language.

Executive director Janet Johanson and a parent, Valery O'Brien, participated in the forum representing Hawaii Services on Deafness.

Contact: Ann Katherine Reimers, Executive Director
Hawaii Services on Deafness
<http://hsod.org/>
E-mail: reimers@hsod.org

The Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center
Seattle, Washington

The Center serves the community through a comprehensive family-centered program that also works extensively with organizations, schools, and other centers to address the educational, service, consultative, and training needs of deaf and hard of hearing children, their families, and practitioners. They offer comprehensive audiology, assistive technology, speech/language, and early intervention services in the Puget Sound area. Their early intervention program, the Parent-Infant Program, serves families with deaf and hard of hearing infants and toddlers.

Parent-Infant Program director Lori Seago and parents Connie Best and Sophorn Sim participated in the forum representing the Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center.

Contact: Lori Seago, Parent-Infant Program Director
The Hearing, Speech & Deafness Center
<http://www.hsd.org/>
E-mail: LMS@hsdc.org

Lexington School for the Deaf, Ready to Learn Parent-Infant/Toddler Program
Jackson Heights, New York

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This is a private, state-supported school that provides educational programs for approximately 400 severely to profoundly deaf students from birth through 21 years of age. The Ready to Learn Parent-Infant/Toddler Program is the designated program for families and their deaf and hard of hearing children between the ages of birth and three years. The program is family-centered and provides school and home-based family sessions, play groups, parent groups, and sign language classes.

Director Janice Berchin-Weiss and a parent, Mayra Gomez, participated in the forum representing the Lexington School for the Deaf.

Contact: Janice Berchin-Weiss, Director of Mediated Instruction
Lexington School for the Deaf
<http://www.lexnyc.org/schdept-preschool.html#ReadyToLearn>
E-mail: <mailto:jberchin-weiss@lexnyc.org>

Los Angeles Unified School District, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infant Program
Encino, California

This program serves deaf or hard of hearing infants and toddlers from birth to three years of age, who may also have additional disabilities, and their families. It provides in-home, play group, and family center services throughout the urban Los Angeles Unified School District.

Infant Service coordinator Janice Myck-Wayne and parents Melissa Caballero and Sacheen Hernandez participated in the forum representing the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Contact: Janice Myck-Wayne, Service Coordinator
Los Angeles Unified School District
<http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/>
E-mail: Myckwayne@yahoo.com

Louisville Deaf Oral School
Louisville, Kentucky

This school provides comprehensive early childhood programs and services to deaf and hard of hearing children and their families. It is a private, nonprofit day school that enrolls approximately 80 to 100 deaf and hard of hearing children from 15 to 18 public schools in the central Kentucky and southern Indiana area. Its family involvement program is based on the development of an “equality partnership” model for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children.

School director Mona McCubbin and parents Sharon Hewes-Feulmer and Diane Wagoner participated in the forum representing the Louisville Deaf Oral School.

Contact: Catherine Carotta, Education Director
Louisville Deaf Oral School
Fax: 502-636-9171

Tennessee School for the Deaf, Parent Outreach Program
Knoxville, Tennessee

This school is a state-supported special school that serves deaf and hard of hearing students from across the state as both a day school and a residential program. The Parent Outreach Program serves families across the state of Tennessee with community-based and statewide services that include Sibshops, sign language classes, summer camps, family learning weekends, regional parent meetings, and parent support groups. In addition to these programs, the school co-sponsors statewide workshops focused on family needs and collaborates with other agencies to provide services to parents through parent meetings.

Parent coordinator Carol Robbins participated in the forum representing the Tennessee School for the Deaf.

Contact: Carol Robbins, Parent Coordinator
Tennessee School for the Deaf
E-mail: Robbinsac@att.net
Telephone: 856-579-2507 or 865-594-6022
Fax: 865-579-2419

Appendix D: Other Resources

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On-line Resources

Odyssey (<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu/odyssey/winter2002/index.html>)

(From the KidsWorld Deaf Net Useful Links family involvement library)

Academy for Educational Development (AED) (<http://www.aed.org/>)

Addressing Student Problem Behavior

(<http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior/main.htm>)

American Society for Deaf Children (<http://www.deafchildren.org/>)

Background of Special Education Legislation

(<http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr/selegis.htm>)

BEGINNINGS: For Parents of Children Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

(<http://www.beginningssvcs.com>)

Center for Child and Family Studies (CCFS) (<http://www.wested.org/ccfs>)

Children's Defense Fund (CDF) (<http://www.childrensdefense.org/>)

Children First (The Web Site of the National PTA) (<http://www.pta.org/>)

Children With Disabilities: Understanding Sibling Issues

(<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/newsdig/nd11.txt.htm>)

CODA: Children of Deaf Adults (<http://www.coda-international.org/>)

Deaf Education: A Parent's Guide (<http://home.inreach.com/torsi/frame.html>)

Deaf Linx (<http://www.deafmall.net/deaflinx>)

Deaf Watch Newsletter (<http://www.i-sphere.com/eyedeaf/deaf.htm>)

Early Interactions With Children Who Are Deaf-Blind

(<http://www.tr.wosc.osshe.edu/DBLINK/early2.htm>)

ERIC Digests: Search All Digests (http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests)

ERIC: Functional Behavioral Assessments (<http://ericec.org/digests/e571.html>)

ERIC: Positive Behavior Support and Functional Assessment

(<http://ericec.org/digests/e580.html>)

Everything You Wanted to Know About Deafness (<http://www.zak.co.il/deaf-info/old/home.html>)

Functional Behavioral Assessment (<http://www.air.org/cecp/fba/default.htm>)

Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavioral Intervention Plan Form

(<http://www.home.cc.duq.edu/~millerjeff/fbabip.pdf>)

Functional Behavioral Assessment: The Link Between Problem Behavior and Effective Intervention in Schools (http://cie.ed.asu.edu/fall98/miller_tansy_hughes/)

Good Start: Suggestions for Visual Conversations with Deaf and Hard of Hearing Babies and Toddlers (<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/visual-conversations/index.html>)

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Guidance on Functional Behavioral Assessments for Students with Disabilities (<http://web.nysed.gov/vesid/p9805.htm>)

Hard of Hearing Advocates (<http://hohadvocates.org/>)

How the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Applies to Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students (<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/IDEA/index.html>)

Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment: The Essentials of Compliance with IDEA (<http://www.behavior-consultant.com/function.htm>)

John Tracy Clinic (<http://www.johntracyclinic.org/>)

Las Preguntas que hacen los Padres sobre la Escuela (Questions Parents Ask about School) (<http://www.ed.gov/Family/agbts/Preguntas/>)

Letter from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): Behavior Assessment (<http://baby.indstate.edu/iseas/Assess11.html>)

A Letter to a Deaf Person by a Parent of a Deaf Child (<http://dww.deafworldweb.org/pub/c/rjc/letter.html>)

The Link Between Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs) (<http://ericec.org/digests/e592.html>)

Links to Resources for Parents of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children and Teens (<http://deafness.about.com/health/deafness/msubpar.htm>)

A Look at Rural Families Weighing Educational Options: Identifying the Factors that Influence Parents as They Make Educational Placement Decisions for Their Children Who Are Deaf (<http://clerccenter2.gallaudet.edu/KidsWorldDeafNet/e-docs/rural-families/index.html>)

Multimodal Functional Behavioral Assessment (<http://mfba.net/>)

National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education (NCBE) (<http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/>)

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education (NCPPIE) (<http://www.ncpie.org>)

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) (<http://www.nichcy.org>)

National Information Clearinghouse on Children Who Are Deaf-Blind (<http://www.tr.wou.edu/dblink>)

National Parent Information Network (NPIN) (<http://npin.org/>)

National PTA Education Resource Library (<http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr.htm#home>)

National PTA Position Statement: Education of Children with Special Needs (<http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr/sechildren.htm>)

National PTA: How to Advocate for Your Special Needs Child (<http://www.pta.org/programs/edulibr/advchild.htm>)

Partnership for Family Involvement in Education (PFIE) (<http://pfie.ed.gov>)

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Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
(PBIS) (<http://www.pbis.org/english/index.html>)

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) (<http://www.kidsource.com/nfpa/social.html>)

Wrightslaw: Functional Behavioral Assessment: What, Why, When, Where, and Who?
(http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/articles/Functional_Behavioral_Assessment_Starin.html)

The Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center at Gallaudet University comprises two federally mandated demonstration schools for students from birth through age 21 who are deaf. These schools, on Gallaudet's campus, work in collaboration with a network of exemplary programs and professionals to identify, research, develop, evaluate, and disseminate innovative curricula, materials, educational strategies, and technologies for deaf and hard of hearing students. The Clerc Center also provides training and technical assistance to families and programs throughout the United States, and serves as a model individualized educational program, working in close partnership with students and their families.

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